

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 GEORGE 01078 01 OF 02 101401Z

ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-15 H-01 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 NSAE-00 OMB-01 PM-05 OES-07 SP-02 SS-15
STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 DOEE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 EUR-12 OC-06 CCO-00 AGRE-00 A-01
SY-05 PER-01 OPR-02 CA-01 FBOE-00 HA-05 PA-01
EPA-01 /149 W

-----069922 101425Z /72

O R 101330Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6527

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 1078

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOCI, ENRG, ABUD, SWEL, GY, AFSP, ABLD, ASUP, ASEC, APER

SUBJECT: ELECTRIC POWER EMERGENCY IN GEORGETOWN-EXISTING SITUATION
AND IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS

1. AT THE INVITATION OF THE CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER,
AMBASSADOR MET ON FRIDAY EVENING APRIL 7 WITH HIM, THE
BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER AND TWO CANADIAN TECHNICAL REPRE-
SENTATIVES WHO HAVE BEEN IN-COUNTRY SINCE APRIL 4 ADVISING
GOG ON THE CURRENT POWER CRISIS. ON THE MORNING OF APRIL 8,
AMBASSADOR AND AID DIRECTOR WERE INVITED BY MINISTER OF
TRADE GEORGE KING TO SIT IN ON MEETING OF GOG TASK FORCE
WHICH HE AND MINISTER JACK JOINTLY CHAIR AND WHICH HAS BEEN
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 GEORGE 01078 01 OF 02 101401Z

FORMED TO DETERMINE WAYS AND MEANS OF DEALING WITH THE
PRESENT CRISIS. (CANADIAN AND BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONERS
WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE AID STAFFS ARE MEMBERS OF THIS
TASK FORCE DUE TO THE FACT THAT BRITIAN AND CANADA HAVE
IN THE PAST FUNDED AID PROJECTS IN THE POWER SECTOR
FOR THE GUYANESE.) THE FOLLOWING REPORT IS DRAWN FROM
THOSE TWO MEETINGS:

2. AS OF NOW POWER HAS BEEN RESTORED TO CERTAIN SECTIONS OF GEORGETOWN ON AN INTERMITTENT BASIS FROM THE FACILITY AT GARDEN OF EDEN, WHICH WENT INTO OPERATION JUST A YEAR AGO. THE SOURCE OF THE TROUBLE IN THE TRANSMISSION LINES FROM THAT FACILITY WHICH LED TO THE FIRST DRAMATIC FAILURE ON APRIL 2 HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED TENTATIVELY, BUT FAIRLY POSITIVELY, BY THE TWO CANADIAN EXPERTS AS CARBON RESIDUE DEPOSITED ON THE INSULATORS WHEN THE CANE FIELDS, THROUGH WHICH THE TRANSMISSION LINES PASS, ARE BURNED IN PREPARATION FOR HARVESTING. THEY THEORIZE THAT THE CURRENT DROUGHT HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROBLEM; IN NORMAL WEATHER, THE RAINS WOULD HAVE KEPT THE CARBON BUILD-UP TO ACCEPTABLE LEVELS; WITHOUT THEM THE BUILD-UP HAS RISEN TO THE POINT WHERE SHORT CIRCUITING HAS OCCURRED. CURRENTLY, THE LINE IS BEING WALKED AND INSULATORS ARE BEING HAND CLEANED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE CANADIANS. SHORT CIRCUITS AT OTHER POINTS IN THE LINE ARE A CONTINUING POSSIBILITY.

3. FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, THE OLD HEAT-POWER PLANT FOR GEORGETOWN LOCATED IN THE KINGSTON DISTRICT IS OUT OF COMMISSION WITH ALL THREE BOILERS DOWN. THE THREE BOILERS WILL BE REPLACED BY NEW EQUIPMENT AGAINST THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE: WORK TO BEGIN IN AUGUST AND TO BE COMPLETED BY MID-1979.
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 GEORGE 01078 01 OF 02 101401Z

4. TO COVER THE PERIOD UNTIL WORK IS COMPLETED AT THE KINGSTON PLANT THE GOG HAS AGREED TO PROCURE FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM TWO ELEVEN MEGAWATT TURBINE GENERATORS, MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT TO COVER THE PURCHASE WITH A LOAN. AS OF THE MOMENT LONDON HAS ONLY AGREED TO THE PURCHASE OF ONE OF THESE UNITS THOUGH THE CANADIAN AND BRITISH POWER TECHNICIANS IN COUNTRY FEEL THAT BOTH ARE NEEDED. ASSUMING THAT THE ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE WORKED OUT, THESE UNITS WILL BE SHIPPED AND INSTALLED AND OPERATING WITHIN THREE MONTHS TIME. (THIS SCHEDULE ALLOWS FOR NO HITCHES AND THE TECHNICIANS PRIVATELY CONSIDER IT TOO OPTIMISTIC.)

5. UNTIL THE TWO UNITS FROM THE UK ARRIVE AND COME ON STREAM, GEORGETOWN IS ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON THE GARDEN OF EDEN FACILITY WHICH THE FOREIGN ENGINEERS SAY IS THEORETICALLY CAPABLE OF PROVIDING TWENTY-FOUR MEGAWATTS TO THE CITY BUT IN ITS PRESENT CONDITION IS TURNING OUT BETWEEN TEN AND ELEVEN. DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE FACILITY HAS BEEN IN SERVICE FOR ONLY A YEAR, ALL FOUR OF THE DIESELS WHICH DRIVE THE PLANT ARE AT LEAST TWO THOUSAND HOURS

OVERDUE FOR OVERHAUL. ONE OF THE FOUR IS ENTIRELY OUT OF COMMISSION FOR WANT OF SPARES. MANY OF THE GAUGES AND LIGHTS ON THE CONTROL PANELS ARE INOPERATIVE AND THERE IS A DEARTH OF OPERATING PERSONNEL TO MAN THE FACILITY. (THE CANADIAN TECHNICIANS FOUND CASES WHERE SOME OF THE PERSONNEL WERE STANDING SHIFTS IN EXCESS OF TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AT A TIME.) EXPERT JUDGMENT IS THAT ALL FOUR UNITS MUST BE OVERHAULED AND RECOMMISSIONED AND THAT THIS WILL REQUIRE MANUFACTURERS' REPRESENTATIVES BEING FLOWN IN WITH TOOLS AND SHARE PARTS TO DO IT. THE CANADIANS AND BRITISH HAVE AGREED TO FUND THIS AND IT IS HOPED THAT THEY CAN ARRIVE DURING THE WEEK OF APRIL 10. IN THE MEANTIME, ACCORDING TO ONE CANADIAN TECHNICIAN, GARDEN OF EDEN'S CONTINUED OPERATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 GEORGE 01078 01 OF 02 101401Z

"HANGS BY A THREAD."

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 GEORGE 01078 02 OF 02 101352Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-15 H-01 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 NSAE-00 OMB-01 PM-05 OES-07 SP-02 SS-15
STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00
INRE-00 DOEE-00 EUR-12 OC-06 CCO-00 AGRE-00 HA-05
PA-01 EPA-01 A-01 SY-05 PER-01 OPR-02 CA-01
FBOE-00 /149 W

-----069822 101425Z /72

O R 101330Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6528
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
AMEMBASSY PANAMA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 1078

6. WITH THE KINGSTON PLANT DOWN, WERE ANYTHING TO HAPPEN TO GARDEN OF EDEN, THE ONLY POWER SOURCE AVAILABLE TO GEORGETOWN WOULD BE FROM THE BAUXITE FACILITY AT LINDEN WHICH MIGHT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE NO MORE THAN ONE-AND-A-HALF MEGAWATTS TO THE CITY. (THE KINGSTON PLANT IN FULL OPERATION IS RATED AT THIRTY MEGAWATTS.)

7. FOR THE TWO TO THREE MONTH PERIOD BEFORE THE TWO GENERATORS FROM THE UK BECOME AVAILABLE, THE GOG IS DESPERATELY ANXIOUS TO OBTAIN AUXILIARY GENERATING UNITS WHICH COULD PROVIDE SUCH KEY INSTALLATIONS AS THE WATER WORKS, THE HOSPITALS, THE FLOUR MILL, AND CERTAIN ESSENTIAL MANUFACTURING PLANTS SUCH AS SOFT DRINK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 GEORGE 01078 02 OF 02 101352Z

BOTTLERS, SOAP MAKERS, ETC., WITH RELIABLE LOCAL POWER TO INSURE THEIR OPERATION AND TO TAKE AS MUCH LOAD AS POSSIBLE OFF GARDEN OF EDEN. (MINISTER KING TOLD AMBASSADOR AND AID DIRECTOR AFTER THE MEETING THAT AMB. MANN WOULD HAVE SPECIFICATIONS FOR SUCH EQUIPMENT NO LATER THAN THE EVENING OF APRIL 10.)

8. COMMENT: THE SATURDAY MORNING MEETING BROKE UP ON A SOMEWHAT OPTIMISTIC NOTE WHICH THE ABOVE FACTS DO NOT NECESSARILY SUPPORT. IT IS TO BE FERVENTLY HOPED THAT ALL OF THE ASSIGNED TASKS ARE COMPLETED AND ALL DUE DATES MET, BUT THE POTENTIAL FOR SERIOUS DIFFICULTY REMAINS HIGH. MURPHY'S LAW HAS ALWAYS HAD A SPECIAL APPLICATION TO GUYANA. THE ECONOMY, NEVER ONE OF THE BRIGHTER ONES IN THE CHRONICALLY DEPRESSED CARIBBEAN, WILL BE STRETCHED THINNER AND FURTHER WITH THE REAL POSSIBILITY THAT IT MAY TEAR AND SHRED IN THE PROCESS. IN REAL TERMS GUYANA REGISTERED NEGATIVE GROWTH LAST YEAR AND THE YEAR BEFORE. THE DISMAL POWER PROSPECTS CONFRONTING GEORGETOWN (WHERE A QUARTER OF GUYANA'S POPULATION LIVES) OVER THE NEXT YEAR ASSURE THAT THERE WILL BE NO EXPANSION OF THE ECONOMY IN 1978. BUT BEYOND THAT, THE POSSIBILITY OF DISASTER SHOULD GARDEN OF EDEN SUFFER A MAJOR BREAKDOWN WHICH WAS NOT IMMEDIATELY REPARABLE IS REAL AND IMMEDIATE.

9. BUT MORE IMPORTANT IS THE COST IN HUMAN TERMS. THE SINGLE FLOUR MILL HAS ANNOUNCED IT WOULD SUSPEND OPERATIONS AS OF APRIL 10. TWO OF THE THREE BOTTLING PLANTS HAVE CLOSED BECAUSE OF THEIR INABILITY TO MAINTAIN SANITATION STANDARDS. GEORGETOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL, AN ANTIQUATED STRUCTURE, HAS BEEN WITHOUT RELIABLE

WATER SUPPLY FOR SEVERAL DAYS SINCE THE MAJOR FAILURE ON APRIL
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 GEORGE 01078 02 OF 02 101352Z

2 AND ITS OPERATING THEATER HAS BEEN CLOSED ALMOST
CONTINUOUSLY SINCE THAT DATE. THE SAME SITUATION
PREVALES AT MERCY HOSPITAL, GEORGETOWN'S SECOND
HOSPITAL. THE OXYGEN PLANT WHICH SUPPLIES OXYGEN, ACETYLENE
AND COOKING GAS IS ALSO CLOSING DUE TO THE LACK OF SUSTAINED
POWER TO ITS COMPRESSORS. THE STANDARD OF LIVING
AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE ORDINARY GUYANESE HAVE NEVER
BEEN HIGH; THE DECLINE IN THESE INDICES OVER
THE PAST EIGHT DAYS HAS BEEN PRECIPITOUS.
BURKE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISASTER RELIEF, ELECTRIC POWER, EMERGENCY PLANNING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GEORGE01078
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780153-1191
Format: TEL
From: GEORGETOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780475/aaaaclexe.tel
Line Count: 241
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7097aab3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3023618
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ELECTRIC POWER EMERGENCY IN GEORGETOWN-EXISTING SITUATION AND IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS
TAGS: SOCI, ENRG, ABUD, SWEL, AFSP, ABLD, ASUP, ASEC, APER, GY
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7097aab3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014